AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-3. (canceled).

4. (previously presented)   An electric apparatus comprising:

a function limiting module for setting a function limit to the electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the electric apparatus become unavailable;

a plurality of interfaces for connecting external devices to the electric apparatus;

a module for obtaining device identification information from an external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the electric apparatus to identify the external device;

a module for generating connection route information indicating which interface of the plurality of interfaces is used to connect the external device that has provided the device identification information;

a module for associating the function limit with a combination of the device identification information and connection route information to obtain a cryptographic key;

a memory for storing at least one cryptographic key;

a determining module for determining whether a second combination of device identification information obtained from each external device of one or more external devices connected via one of the interfaces to the electric apparatus and connection route information for each external device of the one or more external devices matches the cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling module for canceling the function limit set by the function limiting

module if the determining module determines that the second combination of the obtained device

information and connection route information matches the cryptographic key stored in memory.

5-9. (canceled).

10. (currently amended) The electric apparatus claimed in claim 4, further

comprising a module for having the external device that has provided the device identification

information associated with the function limit store information that uniquely identifies the

external device as corresponding to the device identification information if the external device is

capable of storing information.

11-15. (canceled).

16. (previously presented) The electric apparatus claimed in claim 4, further

comprising a module for resetting the function limit if a prescribed period of time has passed

after the determining module made the determination.

17-21. (canceled).

22. (currently amended) The electric apparatus claimed in claim 4, further

comprising:

a module for having the external device that has provided the device identification

information associated with the function limit store information that uniquely identifies the

external device as corresponding to the device identification information if the external device is

capable of storing information; and

a module for resetting the function limit if a prescribed period of time has passed

after the determining module made the determination.

23-27. (canceled).

28. (previously presented) A method for preventing the unauthorized use of an electric apparatus including a plurality of interfaces to connect external devices thereto, comprising:

a function limiting step for setting a function limit to the electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the electric apparatus become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from an external device connected via one of the interfaces to the electric equipment to identify the external device;

a first connection route information generating step for generating first connection route information indicating which interface is used to connect the external device to the electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step;

a step for associating the function limit with a combination of the device identification information and the connection route information to obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining second device identification information from a second external device connected via one of the interfaces to the electric apparatus to identify the second external device;

a second connection route information generating step for generating second connection route information indicating which interface is used to connect the second external device to the electric apparatus at the second device identification information obtaining step;

a determining step for determining whether a second combination of the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information

obtaining step and the second connection route information matches the cryptographic key stored

in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling the function limit set at the function limiting step

if it is determined at the determining step that the second combination of the information

obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step and the second

connection route information matches the cryptographic key.

29-33. (canceled).

34. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of an

electric apparatus claimed in claim 28, further comprising a step for having the external device

that has provided the device identification information associated with the function limit store

information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device

identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step if the

external device connected to the electric apparatus at the first device identification information

obtaining step is capable of storing information.

35-39. (canceled).

40. (currently amended) Thehe method for preventing the unauthorized use of an

electric apparatus claimed in claim 28, further comprising a step for resetting the function limit if

a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

41-45. (canceled).

46. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of an

electric apparatus claimed in claim 28, further comprising:

a step for having the external device that has provided the device identification

information associated with the function limit store information that uniquely identifies the

external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device

identification information obtaining step if the external device connected to the electric apparatus

at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit if a prescribed period of time has passed after

the determining step.

47-51. (canceled).

52. (currently amended) A program recorded on a computer storage medium for

preventing the unauthorized use of an electric apparatus, which is built into the electric

apparatus including a plurality of interfaces to connect external devices thereto, and the program

enabling a computer to control the electric apparatus, wherein the program includes the steps of:

a function limiting step for setting a function limit to the electric equipment so that

at least part of functions of the electric apparatus become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device

identification information from an external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces

to the electric apparatus to identify the external device;

a first connection route information generating step for generating first connection

route information indicating which interface of the plurality of interfaces is used to connect the

external device to the electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining

step;

a step for associating the function limit with a combination of the device

identification information and the connection route information to obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining a second

device identification information from a second external device connected via one of the

plurality of interfaces to the electric apparatus to identify the second external device;

a second connection route information generating step for generating second

connection route information indicating which interface of ~~the~~ the plurality of interfaces is used to

connect the second external device to the electric apparatus at the second device identification

information obtaining step;

a determining step for determining whether a second combination of the second

device identification information obtained at the second device identification information

obtaining step and the second connection route information matches the cryptographic key stored

in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling the function limit of the one or more function

limits set at the function limiting step if it is determined at the determining step that the second

combination of the information obtained at the second device identification information

obtaining step and the second connection route information matches the cryptographic key.

53-57. (canceled).

58. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer storage medium

claimed in claim 52, wherein the program comprises the further step of having the external

device that has provided the device identification information associated with the function limit

store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification

information after the first device identification information obtaining step if the external device

connected to the electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is

capable of storing information.

59-63. (canceled).

64. (previously presented) The program recorded on a computer storage medium claimed in claim 52, wherein the program comprises the further step of resetting the function limit if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

65-69. (canceled).

70. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer storage medium claimed in claim 52, wherein the program comprises the further steps of:

a step for having the external device that has provided the device identification information store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step if the external device connected to the electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

71-72. (canceled).